



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 13, 2006

John O'Brien
(202) 225-2132

Istook Opposes In-State Tuition for Illegal Aliens

Washington, D.C. - Rep. Ernest Istook (R- Warr Acres) took a stand today against in-state tuition for illegal aliens at colleges and universities.

Oklahoma is one of several states that provide the same lower tuition for illegals as for residents of Oklahoma. That law was passed in 2003 with the support of Governor Brad Henry, who signed it into law. However, the practice violates federal law. **"Oklahoma has a bad law and it should be repealed,"** Istook said.

Congressman Istook today spoke in favor of, and voted for, an amendment reaffirming the 1998 federal law against in-state tuition for illegals. The amendment was offered by Texas Rep. John Culberson, and was attached to the federal spending bill for education. Istook made these comments during debate on that amendment:

"What angers the American people is that we have laws dealing with illegal immigration that have not been honored," said Istook. **"They have not been enforced. And people need a reminder of what those laws are. We need to restate it; we need to enforce it."**

The American people do not want people thumbing their nose at the law. It undercuts the very fabric of our society and the system of civil justice and of criminal justice as well.

I realize that some of the people on the other side of the aisle do not like this [federal] law. Nevertheless, it IS the law. If they want to try to repeal it, they should try to repeal it. But as long as it is on the books -- as I believe it should be on the books - we need to be honoring it; we need to be enforcing it. And doing so by restating in this bill is certainly a proper way of issuing a reminder.

My state is one of those affected. I think it's awful that the state of Oklahoma a couple of years ago passed this law to give the same tuition to illegals as they do to people who are residents of Oklahoma. I think it's wrong."

Oklahoma passed its statute for in-state benefits in 2003; giving illegal aliens in-state tuition and making them eligible to receive Oklahoma Tuition Assistance Grant (OTAG) state scholarships and state financial aid.

In 2005-2006, 215 illegal aliens are taking advantage of this policy including 96 at Oklahoma City Community College and 34 at Tulsa Community College. Thirty-seven of those illegal aliens are receiving over \$30,000 in OTAG financial grants. An additional 120 applications have already been received for 2006-2007.